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CIA says it will not hire news people

In a meeting at Central Intelligence Agency headquarters at McLean, Va. (June 24), CIA director George Bush and three of his assistants told representatives of the National News Council no newsman affiliated in any way with an American news organization would be hired for any purpose by the agency.

Clarifying Bush's February 11 policy statement on CIA employment of journalists, the CIA representatives said the agency would, in the future, no longer employ news executives, stringers for American news organizations, foreign nationals working as newsmen for American news organizations and free lance writers who could be interpreted in any manner as being journalists. Any affiliate now falling into these categories, they added, has been or would be terminated as a CIA employee.

The CIA, they also affirmed, will not use news organization "cover" for its employees "cover," in this case, referring to the controversial issue of press credentials, as discussed in the U.S. Senate's recent Select Committee on Intelligence Activities report. (E&P, May 8)

Bush, who attended only part of the meeting, declared, as he has in the past, that he would not release the names of any journalists who have been employed by the CIA.

In reference to requests for such names from various news organizations, he said, "We're not going to do any more. We can't do any more."

In addition, the CIA representatives refused to specify which foreign information services might be presently affiliated with the intelligence organization. Minimizing the "domestic fallout" from stories placed by the CIA in foreign publications, they indicated that this practice would continue.

The meeting, attended by News Council member William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*, and Ned Schnurman, NNC associate director, was the result of a May 3 letter from the Council to Bush requesting clarification of his February 11 policy statement.

MORI/CDF